

ADEPT - Energy & Clean Growth Working Group Minutes

Date & Time:	Tuesday 28th November 2023, 13:00 – 15:00
Venue:	Microsoft Teams Meeting
Chair:	Sheryl French - Assistant Director, Climate Change & Energy Services, Cambridgeshire County Council (SFR)
Attendees:	<p>Alistair Craig – Programme Manager, Cumbria LEP (ACR) Brian White – Clean Energy Manager, Cumbria LEP (BWH) Chitra Nadarajah – Head of Service: Climate Change & Environmental Strategy, Hampshire Council (CNA) Daire Casey – Energy Services Manager, West Sussex County Council (DCA) David Dale – Policy Officer, ADEPT (DDA) Katie Sargent – Greener Futures Group Manager, Surrey County Council (KSA) Kofi Adu-Gyamfi – Climate Change Service Lead, West Berkshire Council (KGY) Kylie Russell – Deputy CEO, ADEPT (KRU) Marouane Azenoud – Energy Manager, West Northamptonshire Council (MAZ) Melania Tarquino – Strategic Energy Lead, Surrey County Council (MTA) Nicola Stringer – Energy Programme Manager, West Sussex County Council (NST) Patrick Allcorn – Head of Local Energy, Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (PAL) Sarah Gilbert – Head of Climate Action, Oxfordshire County Council (SGI) Stacy Sheppard – Retrofit Development Manager, Wiltshire Council (SSH) Sue Davies – Strategic Energy Manager, Luton Borough Council (SDA) Thomas Day – Head of Energy and Low Carbon Programme, Essex County Council (TDA) Vicky Burvill – Senior Climate Officer, Wiltshire Council (VBU)</p>
Guests:	<p>Jo Dicks – Cambridge City Council Tom Garrod – Oxford City Council Tim German – ES Catapult Chris Brierley – ES Catapult Kala Rayner – ES Catapult George Frost – iChoosr Marie-Louise Abretti – iChoosr</p>
Note Taker:	Bayley Wooldridge, Energy Projects Officer, Cambridgeshire County Council (BWO)
Apologies:	<p>Doug Eltham – Environment and Sustainability Policy Officer, Devon County Council Emily Bolton – Climate Crisis Strategy Manager – Cambridgeshire County Council</p>

Item No.	Item
1.	<p><u>Sheryl French welcome, minutes and actions from the last meeting</u></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 16th October 2023 were agreed as a correct record.</p> <p>Any comments on the Terms of Reference to be submitted to BWO by midday 12th December.</p>
2.	<p><u>Insetting and Offsetting – Oxford City Council</u></p> <p>Area Based Insetting in Oxford</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon offsetting: investment in projects outside of an organisation’s area. Problems associated with carbon offsetting include unreliability, risk (of poor investment), and greenwashing. • Insetting: investment within an organisation’s value chain (considered to be within the local authority’s scope 3 emissions). E.g., helping a supplier electrify their fleet. • Authority based insetting (ABI): investment within an organisation’s area, facilitated by the local authority. • There are three key partners (a local authority could be any of these three): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project developers – identify and advertise carbon reduction/sequestration projects. ○ ABI administrator (usually the local authority) – ensures guidance is adhered to. ○ Project funders – provide funds for local projects to go ahead. • Benefits include transparency, robust methodology, new source for capital funding, enables new projects and accelerates progress to net zero, a more justifiable use of public funds. <p>In discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creation of a regional or local authority-specific fund for third parties to invest in is one route to insetting, but not the only option. An alternative is the local authority acts as an intermediary between two parties, i.e., one charity wanting to install solar panels in the local area, and one business wanting to offset. The local authority could link the two parties to facilitate the project. • ABI isn’t the cheapest route but has more value due to secondary benefits. • Some local authorities report considering ABI when looking ahead to net zero target dates, due to its co-benefits (e.g., fuel poverty) making ABI a more politically acceptable option. • Permanence – the methodology of this model uses a 10 year pay-off period. • Greenwashing concern – the option of ABI could deter the private sector from reducing their emissions, which should be the priority. OCC are still looking at the governance of this but suggest ABI could be offered as a last resort option for emissions that cannot be reduced any further. • ABI is not a sale of carbon credits, instead the local authority is directing private sector investment in local projects. • SFE notes CCC are interested in exploring if ABI could this be accredited at a system-wide level, linked to their InnovateUK bid. Action: SFE to share InnovateUK bid with PAL.
3.	<p><u>Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP) – Energy Systems Catapult</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ES Catapult take a ‘whole system’ approach when decarbonising, considering all technologies and infrastructure, energy types, and ecosystems. • 86 areas have, or are developing, a LAEP. • A LAEP is a whole energy system approach that identifies the most cost-effective route for the local area to reach its net zero targets. • Area scope: areas should have a maximum population of 300,000. Areas are split into zones to inform the best pathway for each zone. • Technical scope: the model includes heat, gas, and electricity networks, individual buildings, generation, storage, flexibility, EV infrastructure, and hydrogen/clean gas. Non-electric vehicles and agriculture are not included in the model but are included in the LAEP report.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits of a LAEP: localised, visual, evidence-based, joined up policies, engages with political and community buy in, identifies wider area benefits. <p><u>Wales case study</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Welsh government have funded every local authority (22) to have a LAEP. • A national energy plan will then be prepared based on place-based activity. <p><u>Greater Manchester case study</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 10 local authorities to have a LAEP. • Evidence of the local authorities using their LAEPs to attract investment. <p><u>Local Area Energy Planning: The Time and Place is Now – ES Catapult Report</u></p> <p>In discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water is not included within the model but could be if necessary. Electricity used for pumping water is included in the model. • DDA suggests more work is needed to link LAEPs with other local/place-based plans such as climate action plans, nature recovery strategies, etc. • Local authorities are using LAEPs to assist with funding bids to government – Greater Manchester’s LAEP made a positive contribution to the award of their devolution deal. • Local authorities should own their LAEPs, and DNOs should be key partners involved from the start. • ES Catapult advise working with other local authorities in close proximity to own local area. • PAL notes that government supports the concept of LAEPs but believe they should make better use of AI/digital systems and be more agile. Government agree local authorities should own the LAEP and the data behind it so they can run tools for multiple scenarios themselves.
<p>4.</p>	<p><u>Solar Together Update – iChoosr</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • iChoosr pass on their thanks to those who participated in the ADEPT workshop and reiterate their wish to continue collaborating with local authorities. • iChoosr acknowledge their communication with local authorities on the improvements they are making could have been improved. <p><u>Progress so far</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27,500 installations across the UK – totalling 93 MW installed capacity. • Over 500,000tCO₂ saved. • Private investment of over £200 million. • iChoosr’s current scheme’s average NPS is 44. <p><u>Improvements/Developments being made:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualification methodology needs to be transparent for local authorities, but not publicly available for competitors to copy. • Introducing quarterly installer financial checks (previously these were annual). • Broadened the scope of the financial checks to include checks on shareholders, not just the company. • Wider input from industry stakeholders including pre-qualification checks with MCS and RECC. Companies will be given a RAG rating following these checks. iChoosr have also implemented a live tracker with MCS that provides live updates on installer MCS accreditation status. • Increased the number of contractual KPIs that impact whether an installer can reapply for later schemes. • Installer Management Team has been expanded and iChoosr have increased their contractual ability to move a customer away from an installer not meeting KPIs. • All active installers will be subject to a quarterly risk assessment. • First-time installers are now limited to 250 installations within 6 months. Outcomes of risk assessments/KPIs will affect an installers capacity for future schemes. • Introduced timeline alterations so that customers register in 1 of 4 groups across an 8-week registration period. This ensures customers receive offer letters at the same time and all customers will have 4 weeks to respond to their offer.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working on developing automated reporting between iChoosr and the installer's CRM systems. Installers must keep complaints within a percentage threshold (5-10%). <p>ADEPT will remain involved throughout the process of implementing these improvements.</p> <p>Local authorities can contact George directly with any questions: george@ichoosr.com / 07714 206006</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><u>HUG Delivery – Discussion/Challenges – Cambridge City Council</u></p> <p><u>Background</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cambridgeshire Energy Retrofit Project are currently delivering the HUG2 project in Cambridgeshire. Delivery target was 250 properties in Year 1. So far, they have delivered 28 batches comprising of 34 properties and 83 measures. Onboarding contractors and mobilisation phase has been slower than expected. Most properties have had 2-3 retrofit measures showing “whole house” approach. <p><u>Barriers specific to HUG2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inflexibility of eligible properties (e.g., household income, energy ratings). Lack of transparency around cost caps is deterring contractors from taking on jobs due to the uncertainty of the job being approved in the batch process. Inflexibility of cost caps means certain types of home are missing out. Inflexibility of batch process leads to eligible properties dropping out. <p><u>Suggestions for improvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow projects to meet requirements at an overall project level rather than batch level. CCC would like to explore the possibility of an extension. Certainty of finances would give more confidence in promoting and achieving target numbers. <p>In discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other local authorities report that they are experiencing the same issues. Action: KRU to coordinate a meeting for local authorities to discuss HUG2 challenges, and send a summary of the group's issues to PAL. Action: PAL to discuss the group's issues with policy colleagues.
<p>6.</p>	<p><u>Update from DESNZ/BEIS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> COP28 – additional focus on local and subnational partners. The role of subregions has been driven by the LGA and some core cities. The Net Zero forum continues to look at wider devolution. The buildings retrofit devolution conversation resulted in MOUs being signed with Greater Manchester and West Midlands. More detail is expected in spring 2024. Autumn Statement - £960 million investment in net zero projects (mostly nuclear, wind, grid upgrades).
<p>7.</p>	<p><u>Update from ADEPT</u></p> <p>KRU shared the below written update:</p> <p><u>Transport</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> ADEPT and the Future Highways Research Group published The Carbon Calculation & Accounting Standard (CCAS) Carbon Reporting Guidance for Local Highway Authorities on 31 October. Developed by the FHRG and the result of an 18 month long project which drew in 19 commercial and supply chain partners from across the sector, the guidance will support Local Highway Authorities in establishing their carbon footprint. It also supports the goals for reducing carbon emissions set out in the Climate Change Committee's Sixth Carbon Budget. We have published a SEND transport toolkit (here), which was co-developed with Directors of Children's Services. In addition, we have co-published with ADCS a homes

- to school SEND policy paper ([here](#)) that sets out shared analysis of the issue and the solutions which we consider will make the most significant impact. The intention is to send a joint ADEPT / ADCS / ATCO letter to DfE/DfT, plus possibly CCN and LGA.
- The National Infrastructure Commission published the 2nd National Infrastructure Assessment ([here](#)). NIC attended the ADEPT leadership team to present on the report's conclusions.

Devolution / Growth / Planning

- There will be a joint Sustainable Growth / Environment Board meeting on 13 December focusing on flooding. The objectives are to: 1) help place directors and their teams integrate flood risk management (FRM) and response into place shaping and place services 2) develop a joint understanding of the science and climate change projections – is what we are experiencing going to continue and how much worse will it get? 3) discuss how we integrate FRM and adaptation into planning and all investment decisions, what are the barriers and how can we tackle them and 4) discuss how can we respond to increasing climate change and understand and prepare for the impacts on surface water. If you would like to attend, please email Kylie Russell (kylie.russell@eastsussex.gov.uk).
- We put out a media comment on the Autumn Statement (see [here](#)).
- ADEPT and Colas published new toolkit to tackle local government staff retention crisis - see [here](#).

Environment

- We hosted a workshop with 20+ LAs to share some of the challenges experienced in working with iChoosr / Solar Together. We then held a highly productive meeting with iChoosr; encouragingly, the provider is already actively addressing concerns outlined in ADEPT's report. They remain keen to collaborate in addressing any further issues moving forward.
- We responded to two government consultations on Simpler Recycling: [ADEPT response to Consultation on exemptions and statutory guidance for Simpler Recycling in England](#) and [ADEPT response to Consultation on additional policies related to Simpler Recycling in England](#).
- The government finally published its [response](#) to the Glover Review (of protected landscapes). The new package of measures includes launching a search for a new National Park, 34 new landscape recovery projects, new forests and funding to help more children get outdoors. It also published draft guidance on biodiversity net gain ([here](#)), which will come into force on the date the regulations come into force and biodiversity net gain will commence. This will be updated once the date is confirmed.

Events / Other

- Dates for your diary:
 - Due to the train strikes / overtime ban, we have rescheduled the green finance training day (originally 6th December) till 7th March. You can book [here](#).
 - The next Lunch & Learn – *Liveable Neighbourhoods* - is on Friday 26 January and hosted by Atkins.
 - The Spring Conference and Annual Awards Dinner will be held in London on Thursday 16 May 2024.
- A write up of the 2023 Autumn Conference is [here](#).
- The application window is open for the ADEPT / SOLACE Leadership Development Programme – see [here](#). Over 130 people have now completed the programme, which continues to get excellent feedback. The deadline is midnight on 5th January.

In discussion:

- ADEPT have launched their video on adaptation pathways in collaboration with the Environment Agency – helping local authorities plan and adapt to flooding and coastal risks (see [here](#)).
- ADEPT have launched a retention best practice guide including case studies (see [here](#)).

- Roundtable Feedback and discussions

Adaptation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wiltshire are embedding adaptation into risk management using the local partnerships toolkit. Climate risk assessments at all service levels and directorates. • ADEPT run the Local Authority Adaptation Partnership. Action: KRU to send details of this to the group. <p><u>Carbon Budgets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCC are working on a specification for carbon budgets. Aiming to have a carbon budget for 2025/26 alongside the council's financial budget. • Action: BWO to coordinate a subgroup meeting for interested local authorities to discuss this.
9.	<p><u>Forward agenda planning</u></p> <p>Suggestions for future presentations/discussions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DESNZ Heat Zoning or Heat Network Delivery Unit – Action: PAL to find a speaker (Cantor Mocke). • Green Finance – Action: SFR to find alternative business model offers and opportunities to present.
10.	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p><u>Surrey County Council – Policy Case Studies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCC is looking at bringing in a policy for new builds to prevent the need for retrofit at a later date. • Atkins were commissioned to produce two case studies modelling construction costs and whole life running costs with two scenarios: 1 applying New Build Policy and 1 applying business as usual. • KSA asks if any other local authorities or DESNZ have produced any similar case studies to strengthen SCC's case. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SFR recommended liaising with Cambridge City Council. ○ DCA notes that WSCC have been incorporating HDP recommendations for existing buildings into capital projects such as school classroom extensions. ○ Essex County Council have implemented the requirement for all new schools to be built to net zero standard. Action: TDA to put KSA in touch with the relevant team at ECC. ○ VBU shares that Wiltshire are having difficulty with the new build cost-benefit as they look to build a new leisure centre. More case studies would be beneficial. • DCA mentions how the predicted prices of electricity over the next 10 years could make a large difference in the payback of projects, and this risk needs careful management.
11.	<p><u>Date of next meeting</u></p> <p>Tuesday 23rd January 2024 13:00 – 15:00 via Microsoft Teams.</p>